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ABSTRACT

This report reviews the research needs related to learning in the years beyond the age of compulsory schooling. The first of three sections provides a research overview and suggests research needs. The review is organized around three perspectives: learners, providers, and the societal context. It is stated that much early research focussed on those who had not acquired basic skills; more recently there has been increased attention to learning as an integral part of all adults' lives. Section 2 proposes a matrix to depict a framework for organizing research on lifelong learning. It is recommended that research focus on four basic areas: adult learners, providers of learning opportunities, the societal context in which lifelong learning occurs, and the interactions of learners, providers, and society. The final section proposes an agenda for research. A few of the examples include (1) learner research focusing on needs that may be met through lifelong learning, (2) provider research focusing on characteristics of institutions and individual providers that may influence adults' participation in and benefiting from learning opportunities, (3) societal research focusing on the impact of lifelong learning on society, and (4) interactive research focusing on ways providers and learners interact to facilitate lifelong learning. (CSS)

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Lifelong Learning during Adulthood

An Agenda for Research

The Advisory Panel on Research Needs in Lifelong Learning during Adulthood

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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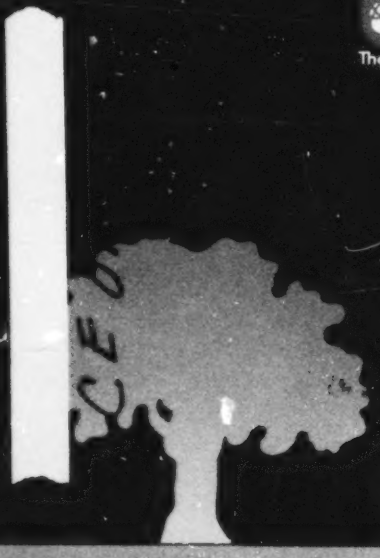
Future Directions for a Learning Society

The College Board



Lifelong Learning during Adulthood

The Advisory Panel on Research Needs in Lifelong Learning during Adulthood

The College Board and
The Coalition of Postsecondary Research Interests

College Entrance Examination Board, New York, 1978

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What is FDLS?

The Future Directions for a Learning Society (FDLS) *program is a major effort toward the realization of a learning society in the United States. The program focuses on improving access and transition for learners, which has been the Board's role in education for more than 75 years. By building on recent Board programs that have increasingly focused on adults, the program extends its historic role to include assistance to adult learners and to the diverse agencies, institutions, and organizations that provide learning opportunities for them.*

Funded by the Exxon Education Foundation, FDLS *develops consensus and support for strategies, services, and policies that can best meet current and projected needs of participants and providers in a learning society. To this end, the program solicits and relies on the participation of professional people in the field, public policymakers, and the larger community. A major purpose of the Exxon grant is to promote the mobilization of additional funds and other resources necessary for major initiatives in this developing field. The initial support covers the project's planning and management, the identification and design of service areas, the review and analysis of public policy, and publishing relevant materials.*

The program will produce projections of future trends, information about the needs of learners and providers of educational opportunities and resources, policy recommendations, and services. The program is engaged in finding better ways to gauge the needs of learners, in identifying the problems institutions face in meeting learners' needs, in strengthening learning opportunities, and in increasing public, professional, and political understanding of the field. A chief focus of the program is to demonstrate promising new approaches and specific services.

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Preface

During the last few years, American society has become increasingly aware of a phenomenon of immense proportions and growing complexity. This phenomenon has been labeled lifelong learning; its framework or structure is referred to as the learning society. Attention has focused particularly on learning in the adult years for, as in other Western societies, the average age in America is rising and many recent studies have shown that more and more adults are pursuing, or say they intend to pursue, some type of learning to assist them in their life adjustments.

American education has responded pragmatically, enthusiastically, and imaginatively to the needs of adults. With astonishing suddenness, new activities and new initiatives have emerged. The number of higher education institutions that offer programs, courses, or services to adults has doubled in less than 10 years, encompassing now nearly all such institutions in the nation. Adults, whether out of need or simply in response to opportunity, have exercised their options: in higher institutions alone their numbers are substantially greater than full-time students aged 18-22.

But America's learning society is not restricted to its formal educational institutions. Studies have estimated that as many as 80 percent of American adults undertake some type of organized learning project each year—many on their own, but also many others do so in government programs, at their place of work, in their churches or synagogues, in the military services, in museums and libraries, and numerous other places.

This vast array of adult learning activity taking place at all levels of American society calls for a critical and constructive analysis. We have much to learn about the learning society: about how it is being created; about what it could become; about the roles available for our institutions and other providers and their roles in concert; about the needs and wants of adults and their learning processes; about matters of equity and financing; about specific activities, programs, and services needed by learners and by institutions; and about how to win broad public participation and support. We must find the right paths for action.

The College Board with the assistance of the Exxon Education Foundation has established a program initiative called Future Directions for a Learning Society. Its intent is to provide a center for ra-

tional, informed inquiry into the problems and possibilities of learning opportunities for all adults and to advance educational policies, programs, and services that encourage excellence and focus on the diverse needs of learners of all ages. The College Board seeks to bring a broad public interest perspective to the concept and the realities of lifelong learning. It is, therefore, appropriate that one of the first efforts of the new College Board program should be to produce this agenda of the unanswered questions that confront educators, planners, and policymakers about the future of lifelong learning.

Answering these kinds of questions will require the participation of many, a great deal of time, and substantial amounts of money. In offering this agenda, we need to acknowledge also that even the questions may change as events occur in the future. This, then, is an attempt to chart new directions, but not to prescribe them; to encourage new types of research in new areas of human development, but not to delimit them; and to acknowledge that we do not have all the answers with respect to the role that continuous learning plays in adult growth and development, but that we should give them first priority attention since they are no less important to the development of our society than are concerns about the education of young people.

Rexford G. Moon, Jr.
Managing Director
Future Directions for a Learning Society

Acknowledgments

Preparing an agenda for research for an area as broad and diverse as "lifelong learning during adulthood" is probably an impossible task. And if such an agenda is also intended to indicate priorities among areas of concern, the task becomes even less feasible. Yet, it is the conviction of the Advisory Panel on Research Needs in Lifelong Learning during Adulthood that the impossible must be attempted. Decisions are going to be made, in any case, about what research to support; and it may be that those making the decisions will be helped by the considered judgments of people who have thought deeply about the most important issues.

The following is an attempt to distill a research agenda from the various contributions of panel members and others, including written and oral commentaries on various drafts of this report and a day-long discussion in which members of the panel participated.

We view this report not as a definitive research agenda for lifelong learning during adulthood, but as one stage in a continuing process of shaping and implementing such an agenda. The first draft of the report evoked strong responses, some very supportive, others critical. The second version attempted to accommodate the differences, where it was possible to do so and to illuminate the others.

We think that few who read this report will question its inclusions although many will likely object to its omissions. As the list is additionally reviewed, it will surely grow; and, more significantly, topics will be reformulated to include a broader range of interrelated issues.

Some reviewers will argue with the organizational framework. There is no perfect one. We use the one based on work done by the National Center for Education Statistics—National Center for Higher Education Management Systems because it is likely to become widely used in the field. Our chief concern is to insure that the framework be seen as a limited but useful tool and that it be used neither to avoid attention to important issues nor to force attention to unimportant ones.

Another point at which reviewers may criticize what is presented is in the statements about past and current research relevant to individual topics or broad issues. Here we are most likely to be in error because we did not know all the relevant work. We decided that a thorough "state of the art" review should be one of the next tasks to be undertaken.

Similarly, we recognized that much research relevant to lifelong learning has been done in other fields and might not be identified in a literature review. The panel is, therefore, proposing that a "derivation" study be undertaken for the purpose of identifying related research. Indeed, it is possible that research that may have the greatest impact on adult learning will be done by researchers in other fields or by researchers who pursue their own interests without regard to agendas and frameworks of the kind presented here. One member of the panel specifically cautions against expecting too much from efforts of this kind, and all members of the panel recognize that agenda-building is only one of the ways in which research subjects are identified.

We are calling for an ambitious agenda that will require large resources of talent, time, and money. Such an agenda should be shaped thoughtfully and with maximum participation of those who must execute it, support it, and use the results. We are talking, in short, not of an agenda for a day, but for a decade.

This document has been reviewed by a group of people from university extension and continuing education programs in large state universities (see Appendix). The Future Directions for a Learning Society program is seeking funds to convene a conference at which practitioners and policymakers can tell researchers and those who support research what they believe are the areas in which research can be helpful to them. It is hoped that this process will lead to more fruitful exchanges among research specialists and those who use the results of their work.

The task of developing a research agenda for lifelong learning during adulthood was originally initiated by the Coalition of Postsecondary Research Interests, under the chairmanship of John F. Hughes, of the American Council on Education. A panel, constituted of people especially knowledgeable about research and research needs in lifelong learning was selected, and Norman D. Kurland of the New York State Education Department was asked to serve as chairperson. Pamela Christoffel of the College Board, Washington, D.C., served as liaison between the coalition and the panel. Subsequently, the panel was asked to serve in a similar capacity for the Future Directions for a Learning Society program of the College Board, directed by Rexford G. Moon, Jr. This project provided fi-

nancial support for developing the agenda and for the publication of this report. Lorraine M. Zinn provided staff support.

First and second drafts of the paper were reviewed by a number of people who share concerns related to lifelong learning. The panel gratefully acknowledges the encouragement and constructive criticism provided by: George F. Aker (Florida State University), Marcie Boucouvalas (Florida State University), G. T. Bowden (American Telephone and Telegraph Company), Robert L. Craig (American Society for Training and Development), K. Patricia Cross (Educational Testing Service), Lois-ellen Datta (National Institute of Education), Lloyd Davis (National University Extension Association), Winifred M. deLoayza (deLoayza and Zinn Associates), Phillip Frandson (University of California at Los Angeles), Gene G. Gage (The University of Mid-America), Linda S. Hartsock (Adult Education Association of the U.S.A.), Carroll M. Hutton (International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America—UAW), Garrett Murphy (Albany Adult Learning Center), James O'Toole (University of Southern California), Richard E. Peterson (Educational Testing Service), Penny Richardson (HEW Lifelong Learning Project), Justine Rodriguez (United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare), Manny Smith (United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare), Charles B. Stalford (National Institute of Education), Allen Tough (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education), C. Wayne Williams (New York State Education Department), and Warren L. Ziegler (Syracuse Research Corporation).

We mean to present the report to those who establish policy and are responsible for funding educational research. It will also be circulated to researchers and potential users of research for their comments.

Norman D. Kurland

April 1978

Summary

Definition of Research Area

Learning is for life—a lifetime of growth and development of the individual, nurtured from time to time by various activities that occur in a variety of conditions and settings. The term lifelong learning refers to the purposeful activities people undertake with the intention of increasing their knowledge, developing and updating their skills, and modifying their attitudes throughout their lifetimes. This may happen in formal settings such as schools, or in less formal settings—for example, in the home, or at work; the teacher may be a professional educator or some other knowledgeable person—a master craftsman, a business person, a peer; the "instructional materials" may be traditional texts and books or may include the newer technologies such as television and computers; learning experiences may occur in a classroom or they may be field experiences such as museum visits or internships.

Although in the broadest sense lifelong learning encompasses the entire lifespan, the scope of research needs identified by this panel is restricted to learning during adulthood. The "adult" years may be roughly designated as the period of life beyond the age of compulsory schooling and initiated when an individual takes primary responsibility for his or her own life.

Summary of Current Research

Most educational research has been devoted to children and young people. Over the years, however, a small number of scholars have done research in the field of adult education, with much of the recent work devoted to adults who had not acquired basic skills or adult competencies. More recently, there has been increased attention to learning as an integral part of the life of all adults, and interest has grown in the characteristics and needs of adults as learners. At the same time, there has been continued attention to the processes of adult education and the characteristics, needs and performance of educational providers who encourage and facilitate adult learning.

Need for Future Research

As increasing numbers of adults seek to pursue learning, as providers at all levels seek to attract and serve adults, and as pressure grows for public policy and support, the need for better understanding of adult learning and how it can be fostered becomes urgent. Such a claim must not detract from our need to know more about how to provide effectively for the education of young people. But we must now expand the base of knowledge on which we build by focusing our attention on the learning of adults. So interrelated is the learning of people at all stages that we cannot make great gains in the education of young people unless those who shape that education—parents, teachers, and the adult society—are successful in their own learning.

Recommended Priority Areas

It is recommended that research focus on four basic areas: adult learners; providers of learning opportunities; the societal context in which lifelong learning occurs; and the interactions of learners, providers, and society.

Research That Focuses Primarily on Learners

1. Learner needs that may be met through lifelong learning.
2. Learner characteristics or conditions that facilitate or impede adults' engaging in and benefiting from learning opportunities.

Research That Focuses Primarily on Providers

3. Characteristics or conditions of institutional and individual providers that may influence adults' participating in and benefiting from learning opportunities.
4. Administrative and management functions of provider institutions that may facilitate or impede the provision of learning opportunities.

Research That Focuses Primarily on Society

5. Impact of lifelong learning on society.

Research That Focuses on the Interactions of Learners, Providers, and Society

6. Ways in which providers and learners interact to facilitate life-long learning.

7. Impact of society on learners; public policies and practices that facilitate or impede adult learning.

8. Impact of society (public practices and policies) on providers of learning opportunities.

9. Dissemination and use of research findings.

Background

The lifelong learning concept is certainly not new. About the turn of the century, the concept became associated with a philosophy of adult education espoused by Sir Richard Livingstone, Eduard Lindeman, and others. It is based on the belief that learning is not merely "preparation for life"—it is an inherent part of the ongoing human process of living, growing, and developing. Learning continues as long as life lasts; life is a self-renewing process that is nurtured by learning; the whole of life may be considered educative, or contributing to learning.

Definition

The term lifelong learning is now widely used to refer to the purposeful activities that people undertake with the intention of increasing their knowledge, developing and updating their skills, and modifying their attitudes throughout their lifetimes. Much of this activity takes place in formal settings—schools and colleges; but even more goes on outside the school—in the home, the community, the workplace, and the greater society. Indeed, all of the individual's environment contributes to learning. Added to the traditional classroom are learning settings such as libraries, museums, religious organizations, social clubs, professional associations, places of employment, labor unions, community centers, and the world at large. The "teacher" may be a peer, a friend, a knowledgeable business person, a master craftsman, a professional instructor, and even the learner him/herself. "Instructional materials" may include, in addition to the usual texts and other books, magazines, newspapers, films, television, radio, audio- and video-cassettes and computers. The focus is on the learner, who is encouraged and assisted to become increasingly self-directed, responsible for and involved in the planning and attaining of his/her own learning goals.

Limitations

Although in its broadest sense, lifelong learning encompasses the entire lifespan, the scope of this paper will be restricted to learning during adulthood. The "adult" years may be designated roughly as the period of life beyond the age of compulsory schooling, beginning

when an individual takes primary responsibility for his/her own life.

We further confine our focus to learning activities that are deliberately undertaken and are generally part-time or short-term, usually undertaken by persons for whom learning is a secondary, rather than a primary, activity. This focus does not, then, include full-time preparatory education of children or young people, nor full-time professional preparation of adults, nor any of the full-time programs of postsecondary educational institutions, except as those may be specifically designed for adults (for example, degree programs that are based on adults' life experience or adapted to the scheduling requirements of adults).

Purposes

The purposes of this paper are: to offer a brief commentary on the current status of research in the field of lifelong learning during adulthood; to present a rationale for increased financial support for further research; and to identify and categorize major areas of needed research.

Intended Audiences

The paper is prepared primarily for individuals who have responsibility for the allocation of research monies and/or the development of public policy and legislation regarding lifelong learning. It may also serve researchers in the interrelated fields of lifelong learning and adult education as an indicator of future research needs and directions. And it may interest practitioners and prospective practitioners (for example, graduate students of adult education) as a commentary on the present state of the art of research on lifelong learning.

The Importance of Lifelong Learning

We adopt this focus because we believe that promoting effective learning by adults is of crucial importance to the future well-being of individuals and of society. We are experiencing at least two major cultural changes simultaneously: our population is growing older as

birth rates drop and life spans lengthen and, at the same time, people are forced to deal with increasingly complex personal and social changes for which no amount of "preparatory" education is adequate.

The need for attention to lifelong learning was identified in the "Mondale Lifelong Learning Act" (PL 94-482, Higher Education Act, Title IB, 1976 Amendments), that begins with the following statements about the importance of lifelong learning in our society:

1. Accelerating social and technological changes have had an impact on the duration and quality of life.

2. The American people need lifelong learning to enable them to adjust to social, technological, political, and economic changes.

3. Lifelong learning has a role in developing the potential of all persons including improvement of their personal well-being, upgrading their workplace skills, and preparing them to participate in the civic, cultural, and political life of the nation.

4. Lifelong learning is important in meeting the needs of the growing number of older and retired persons.

7. More effective use should be made of the resources of the nation's educational institutions in order to assist people of the United States in the solution of community problems in areas such as housing, poverty, government, recreation, employment, youth opportunities, transportation, health, and land use.

The Congress concluded this assessment of the importance of lifelong learning by setting as a goal for American society that there should be: "The availability of appropriate opportunities for lifelong learning for all its citizens without regard to restrictions of previous education or training, sex, age, handicapping condition, social or ethnic background, or economic circumstance."

Need for Research on Lifelong Learning during Adulthood

The attainment of this goal will require greater understanding of the nature of learning throughout life and of the means for helping people to learn. Moreover, as increasing numbers of adults seek to pursue learning, as educational institutions and agencies at all levels seek to attract and serve adults, and as the pressure grows for public

policy and support, the need for better fundamental understanding of adult learning and how it can be fostered becomes urgent. Such a claim does not detract from our need to know more about how to provide effectively for the education of young people. However, we must now also expand the base of knowledge on which we build by focusing our attention on the learning of adults.

Indeed, so interrelated is the learning of people at all life stages that we cannot make great gains in educating young people unless those who shape their education—parents, teachers and the adult society—are themselves successful in their own learning.

Even though adult learning is part of the continuum of lifelong learning, in the past most of the emphasis of research on learning, development, and education has focused on children and youth. Over the years, however, a small number of scholars have done research in the field of adult education, with much of the recent work focused on adults who had not acquired basic skills or adult competencies.

More recently, there has been increased attention to learning as an integral aspect of the life of all adults, not just those whose prior learning had been in some ways deficient. Also, greater emphasis has been given to the characteristics and needs of adults as learners.

With the growing significance of lifelong learning in our society, research related to learning during adulthood deserves more attention and support. Along with increased emphasis on adult learners and the learning process, research must continue to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of the process of adult education and the characteristics, needs, and performance of educational providers who encourage and facilitate adult learning.

Purpose and Scope

The primary purpose of research on lifelong learning during adulthood is to generate knowledge that will be useful for improving the processes by which society in general, and educational providers in particular, support and facilitate adult learning. Significant advances in knowledge that would be helpful in formulating policy and in establishing practices will now come primarily from research that deals with the complex interrelationships among all the factors that affect

learning. We need to know how the characteristics of different people interact with different kinds of teachers and institutional settings, and how these in turn are influenced by the "climate" for learning generated by society as it creates expectations of what individuals of various ages and roles (i.e., worker, parent, citizen) should know, do, and feel. Such knowledge comes from research that examines many learners in varied settings and societal contexts over extended periods of time. Knowledge from such research does not come quickly or easily, nor does it come without cost. But it is fundamental to the development of sound policy and effective practices.

Anticipated Outcomes

It is our belief that more and better research on lifelong learning during adulthood can be expected to result in:

1. Further development, organization, and refinement of the body of knowledge related to lifelong learning.
2. Knowledge about the costs and benefits of lifelong learning for individual learners, educational providers, and the larger society.
3. Guidelines for policymakers and practitioners in their decisions regarding policies, programs, and practices.
4. Suggestions for ways in which institutions and organizations can effectively collaborate to facilitate lifelong learning.
5. Guidelines for selecting and training people who would have the competencies necessary to promote and facilitate adult learning.
6. Guidelines for the development, selection and use of materials, methods, and media that will best assist the adult learner.

An Overview of Relevant Research[1]

The following overview of recent research relevant to lifelong learning during adulthood is based mainly on research findings that have been reported during the past 15 years. During the past decade, the Adult Education Association and the ERIC Clearinghouse concerned with the education of adults have prepared compilations of abstracts of research and investigations that deal with many personal and organizational aspects of systematic learning by adults. In addition, several recent books and monographs have contained extensive reviews of research findings on topics such as adult development and learning, patterns of adult information seeking, planning for innovation through dissemination and utilization of knowledge, and several national reviews of adult and continuing education.

The scope of research and development questions related to lifelong learning during adulthood is very broad. As a way of helping to focus attention on closely related questions, this review is organized around three broad perspectives: learners, providers, and the societal context. Most research questions related to systematic learning by adults can be subsumed under these three topics. Within each section, some of the main problems and variables are identified, followed by a brief overview of available relevant research. This overview indicates the existing body of research findings that would be extended or supplemented by further research.

The Learner Perspective

General

The amount of research on adult development and learning has increased rapidly during the past two decades to the point that there is now a substantial body of tested knowledge on adult learning, personality, performance, condition, and context that has implications for practitioners who help adults to learn (Knox, 1977). A major source of this research literature has been studies on aging and gerontology that have included middle aged as well as older adults (Eisdorfer and Lawton, 1973). Although researchers whose main

1. Adapted from a review presented by Alan Knox in a paper entitled, *Current Research Needs Related to Systematic Learning by Adults*, September 1977. Minor changes in wording and organization have been made.

long-term scholarly interest is continuing education[2] have produced less than half of the studies related to adults as learners, they have produced a small but steady number of research reports each year on dynamics of adult learning, and a larger and growing number of research reports on continuing education for special groups, such as young adults, women, minorities, and older adults, that pertain to aspects of adult development.

Personality

Early research on personality variables related to continuing education focused on correlates of participation, and on ego development and developmental tasks. Recent compilations of research findings related to adult personality have suggested a much wider range of research questions that can be pursued to produce findings useful to practitioners who help adults to learn (Neugarten, 1964; Maddi, 1972; Baltes and Schaie, 1973; Eisdorfer and Lawton, 1973). Some studies have dealt with the developmental interweaving of personality and performance variables during adulthood (Lowenthal, Thurnher, and Chiriboga, 1973; Maas and Kuypers, 1974). Some studies have examined the impact of the college experience on student personality development (Feldman and Newcomb, 1969; Trent and Medsker, 1968). Some have focused on personality stability and change in relation to adjustments in later life (Williams and Wirths, 1965). Self concept during adulthood has been increasingly studied during the past decade (Fitts, 1972).

Condition

There has been very little research on the impact of physical condition on adult learning. There have been some studies of condition and learning by older adults who are increasingly likely to experience physical deficits that can interfere with learning (Birren and others, 1963; Granick and Patterson, 1971). The compilation of tested knowledge about developmental physiology during adulthood by Timiras (1972) contains many generalizations about physical functioning that can be analyzed in relation to adult learning per-

2. The term "continuing education," used by Knox, refers to "lifelong learning during adulthood," as defined earlier in this paper.

formance. Atypical adults for whom special education is needed constitute a specialized target market about whom very little research is available. The few major studies and reviews on this topic that have been conducted deal mainly with adult mental retardation (Baller, Charles, and Miller, 1967; Long, 1973).

Performance

Early research on performance mainly gave attention to family life and occupation, but seldom included analyses of developmental processes or implications for continuing education. The provocative monograph by Havighurst and Orr (1956) illustrated how to study developmental tasks with direct implications for continuing education, but only a few similar research studies on adult role changes have resulted (Lowenthal, Thurnher, and Chiriboga, 1975; Pascal and others, 1975). Some of the research findings regarding retirement and old age have implications for lifelong learning, and in recent years continuing education scholars and practitioners have increasingly explored these implications.

Learning

Early research on adult learning focused on trends in learning ability with age. Since a decade ago, after longitudinal studies had demonstrated the stability and even growth in learning ability during much of adulthood and refuted the conclusion from cross-sectional studies that learning ability declined steadily during adulthood, research interest has shifted from describing trends in learning ability to analyzing dynamics of the learning process. Major contributions have been made by educational psychologists interested in adult development and learning (Sjogren and Knox, 1965; Botwinick, 1967; Goulet and Baltes, 1970). Communications researchers have helped to broaden attention to less formal means of adult information seeking (Parker and Paisley, 1966; Rees and Paisley, 1968). There was even evidence that extent of prior participation in continuing education was associated with learning effectiveness for adults with comparable levels of intelligence, which encouraged greater attention to adult learning strategies (Knox, Grotelueschen, Sjogren, 1968).

Needs

As a field that has depended on voluntary participation by adults, continuing education has long given attention to the needs and interests of potential participants, and there has been a moderate accumulation of research on continuing education needs assessment. The recent review of this literature by Monette (1977), as well as the more general article on social need by Bradshaw (1974), indicate the utility of multiple methods of needs assessment. Included are clientele analysis (Knox, 1965a), reasons for participation (Houle, 1961; Boshier, 1977), and task analysis (Northcutt, 1973), along with widespread use of opinions of experts.

The Provider Perspective

Perspective

Research regarding history, philosophy, trends, and issues contributes to a sense of the unity and continuity of the field of continuing education of adults. This includes experience in other parts of the world as well as in North America. In the past, a perspective on the field has been largely transmitted by full-time personnel, most of whom have been administrators; however, this topic also applies to the broad topics on learners and practitioners. Studies that contribute to a broad perspective of the field include historical research on leaders, individual agencies, types of agencies, professional associations, and the field of continuing education as a whole. Also included are comparative studies that contribute to a cross-national perspective that can place domestic experience in its societal context. Analyses of issues and traditions that confront practitioners and policymakers can also produce findings that contribute to the sense of coherence and continuity that spans agency sponsorship, time, and place.

Organization and Administration

Research findings related to agency administration and the organization of the field tend to be of particular interest to continuing education practitioners because most of those who are employed full time in the field are administrators; most teachers of adults do so on a

part-time basis. There is a small but steady amount of continuing education research being done on various aspects of administration each year. A much larger amount of relevant research is reported from related fields that also deal with administration and organizational behavior. A modest amount deals with the historical development and the current scope of the field, and this research is important to the sense of perspective and continuity that practitioners have of adult and continuing education. Continuing education program administrators tend to be interested in generalizations about adults as learners and about program development procedures as they select, supervise, and evaluate those who teach and counsel adult participants, and conduct in-service staff development programs for them. In addition, continuing education research findings are of interest to administrators in relation to the major tasks they perform. Included are marketing, counseling, staffing, dealing with finance and facilities, understanding organizational dynamics, and providing organizational leadership in relation to administrative, instructional, and support staff in the agency, as well as in relation to the parent institutions, co-sponsors, community, profession, government and societal trends. There are few comprehensive reviews of research findings related to continuing education organization and administration but there are several handbooks for continuing education administrators (Smith, Aker, and Kidd, 1970; Shaw, 1969).

A few major studies have been conducted over the years regarding organizational functioning of the continuing education agency, both internally and in relation to the parent institution and community (Clark, 1956; Carey, 1963; Mezirow, Darkenwald, Knox, 1975; Farmer and Knox, 1977). In addition, national studies of external degrees (Houle, 1973) and of continuing higher education generally (Knowles, 1969) contain both references to tested knowledge regarding organizational relationships and generalizations to be tested by future research.

Program Development

About one-third of continuing education research over the years has dealt with aspects of program development that include both planning for and conducting educational activities for adults. This em-

phasis on program development is understandable because tasks related to setting, needs, objectives, activities, and evaluation are crucial to those who plan and conduct educational programs for adults. Research related to program development has focused on program planning and evaluation procedures, instructional methods and materials, and needs of special client groups, including ways to adapt continuing education programs to their circumstances. Evaluation research reports are classified according to the aspects of continuing education on which each study focused. Basic books on continuing education program development approaches and procedures sometimes review research findings but are even more useful as a source of generalizations that could be tested by research (Houle, 1972; Knowles, 1970; Knox, 1974). Havelock's (1969) comprehensive review and synthesis of research findings on procedures to facilitate the dissemination and utilization of knowledge contains many research-based generalizations that have relevance for continuing education.

In addition to research on the various components of program development, there are some studies that analyze comprehensive program development approaches (Pennington and Green, 1976). In recent years there have been several studies on the impact of adult learner participation in the program development process, and on achievement.

Activities

Some research studies and many evaluation reports deal with the teaching-learning transaction, including procedures for selecting and organizing learning activities. Research on teaching generally has some utility, especially for more formal types of continuing education (Travers, 1973). Teaching methods tend to be very similar in effectiveness for those adults who persist; so a major criterion for program design is attraction and retention of participants. Some of the most useful studies of the continuing education teaching-learning experience have analyzed interrelatedness of teaching style, learning style, and types of objectives (Solomon, Bezdek, and Rosenberg, 1963; Hill, 1960). If ever people become self-directed learners it seems likely to occur during adulthood. The studies by Houle (1961) and Tough (1971) have stimulated additional studies of self-

directed learning by adults (such as Luikart, 1977).

A recent overview of the topic contains additional generalizations that could be tested by research (Knowles, 1975). Research on print and electronic educational materials for adults has been occurring. Overviews of organization development and community development contain many generalizations that could be tested by research, but, so far, few have been (Bennis, Benne, and Chin, 1969; Beckhard, 1969; Bennis, 1969; Biddle and Biddle, 1965). Descriptions and evaluations of innovative learning activities and educational programs, such as the Metroplex Assembly for Civic Education, can be very valuable for both practitioners and researchers (Johnson, 1965).

Evaluation

In addition to the use of evaluation findings regarding any aspect of continuing education, research can be conducted regarding the program evaluation process. Comprehensive overviews of continuing education program evaluation may be based on some research findings regarding evaluation procedures, but mainly present an articulated set of generalizations that can be tested by future research (Grotelueschen, Gooler, Knox, 1976). Some research reports related to evaluation procedures serve to validate evaluation instruments (Knox, Grotelueschen, Sjogren, 1968; Grotelueschen and Knox, 1967). Others describe and analyze program evaluation projects (Roth, 1964). Recent research related to evaluation procedures has dealt with such topics as noncognitive measures and materials improvement in addition to evaluation of short-term programs. Perhaps the greatest need for research related to evaluation procedures is for validation studies to develop feasible outcome measures for continuing education programs that have a demonstrated relationship to application.

Resources

Physical and financial resources with which continuing education administrators deal include money, facilities, equipment, and materials. There have been a few research studies relating to continuing education resources, including topics such as conference centers (Alford, 1968), financial assistance to participants (Kurland, 1977), fi-

nancial arrangements (Thomas and Griffith, 1970), staff accountability, and economic return to participants.

Information and Counseling Services

One administrative function is the provision of information and counseling services to attract and retain adult participants. Public information specialists help program administrators with the marketing activities that help attract participants. An overview of marketing concepts and procedures for nonprofit organizations reflects tested knowledge from the general marketing field and suggests generalizations that can be tested regarding their application to continuing education (Kotler, 1974). Continuing education practitioners have had access to tested knowledge regarding characteristics of participants (Johnstone and Rivera, 1965), patterns of adult information seeking (Parker and Paisley, 1966), dissemination of innovations (Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971), systemic linkage (Havelock, 1969), various studies on reasons for participation (such as Burgess, 1971), and more recently, procedures for marketing continuing education. A few studies have analyzed the range of personal and situational influences on the decision to participate in continuing education (Knox, 1970). Such findings have implications for marketing, as do studies on the contribution of personal influence on the decision to participate (Booth and Knox, 1967). There have been a substantial number of continuing education persistence and withdrawal studies (Knox and Sjogren, 1964; Londoner, 1972; Truesdell, 1975) but little attention to the function of counseling to encourage persistence.

Staffing

Although staff selection and development is a crucial administrative function, there has been relatively little research on continuing education staffing. An exception is a study of faculty perceptions of continuing education (Porter, 1970). Of course, all the generalizations about continuing education in organizational settings can be applied to staff development activities for continuing education staff. One of the recent overviews of continuing education staff development was prepared by Spear (1976).

Leadership

In addition to tasks related to program development, marketing, counseling, staffing, and resources, continuing education administrators sometimes provide organizational leadership in relation to agency staff as well as in relation to the parent institution, co-sponsors, community, profession, government and societal trends. There have been a few studies of administrative practices and role expectations but very few analyses of time use and administrative style. Statements on issues that continuing education administrators confront suggest dynamic topics for research on leadership (Knox, 1975). One administrative function is to initiate new projects and facilitate innovation. Some of the procedures that are especially conducive to such efforts have been identified (Darkenwald, 1977; Farmer and Knox, 1977). The professional competence of the director of continuing education tends to be crucial. Some studies have identified potential relationships with the federal government (Liveright, 1968; Liveright and Masconi, 1971) and with graduate programs that prepare continuing education administrators (Knox, 1973).

The Societal Context

There has been very little research on the impact of the societal context of family, work, or community on systematic learning by adults. Such studied have occurred for full-time college students (Feldman and Newcomb, 1969). A few studies have been conducted on the relation between living arrangements for older adults and information seeking. An association has been demonstrated between employer encouragement and extent of participation by employees in continuing education (London, Wenkert, and Hagstrom, 1963). There is also an association between abundance of continuing education opportunities in a community and participation rates (Johnstone and Rivera, 1965). Research on social gerontology has suggested potential societal facilitators and barriers to systematic learning by older adults (Riley, Foner, and others, 1968). Procedures for studying the quality of community life have been developed and refined in recent years (Barker and Schoggen, 1973).

The purposes and resources of the agency that sponsors continu-

ing programs, and the sponsor's relationship to community groups in its service area, has a major influence on program priorities, along with evidence or assumptions about client needs. Unfortunately there is very little research on how the characteristics of sponsoring agencies and co-sponsoring groups influence program priorities and objectives.

A Framework for Organizing Research on Lifelong Learning

Research on learning and education generally seeks to determine the nature, extent and/or effects of interactions that occur in the process of learning (and "educating"). This research begins with a description of the various elements that comprise the teaching/learning situation. The following questions provide a place to begin the process of describing lifelong learning opportunities.[3]

1. For whom is the learning opportunity[4] provided?
2. By whom is the learning opportunity provided?
3. In what societal context does the learning opportunity occur?
4. Why is the learning opportunity provided or undertaken?
5. What is the substantive content of the learning opportunity?
6. How is the learning opportunity provided?
7. What resources are employed in the learning opportunity?
8. What support functions enable and facilitate the learning opportunity?
9. What are the results of the learning opportunity?

Answers to these questions will provide basic descriptive data about learners, providers, societal context, purposes, content, methods, resources, support functions and outcomes of learning opportunities. The first three questions present perspectives from which learning opportunities may be viewed: the learner's perspective, the provider's perspective, and the societal perspective. The remaining questions identify significant aspects for describing learning opportunities.

An Organizational Framework

When the aspects that describe learning opportunities are viewed from the different perspectives of the learner, the provider, and the society, a comprehensive picture or map emerges. This map may be depicted in the form of a matrix (Table 1) suggesting interactions

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3. These questions and the proposed organizational framework are based on recent work reported in *A Handbook of Standard Terminology for Describing Adult Learning Opportunities*, National review draft, March 1978, prepared for the National Center for Education Statistics by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems in Boulder, Colorado.

4. The term "learning opportunity" refers to any and all types of learning activities, projects, and endeavors that are deliberate, planned, and/or purposeful.

Table 1. Framework for Organizing Research on Lifelong Learning

	Learners	*Providers*	*Societal context*
Description	L-1	P-1	S-1
Purposes	L-2	P-2	S-2
Content	L-3	P-3	S-3
Methods	L-4	P-4	S-4
Resources	L-5	P-5	S-5
Support Functions	L-6	P-6	S-6
Outcomes	L-7	P-7	S-7
Interactions	*Learners* ↔ *Providers* ↔ *Societal context*		

Interactions

Description ↕

Purposes ↕

Content ↕

Methods ↕

Resources ↕

Support Functions ↕

Outcomes ↕

Interactions among Learners, Providers and Societal Context

of learners, providers, and society with all the aspects that comprise learning opportunities.

The following definitions are offered for clarification:

Learners: Persons who undertake and/or participate in learning opportunities, activities, projects, and endeavors.

Providers: Individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions that offer learning opportunities for adults, including individual learners and groups as their own providers as well as persons, groups, educational institutions, and other institutions that may provide learning opportunities for adults.

Societal context: The larger societal context in which learning opportunities occur, made up of several types of groups sharing certain traits. These groups may be interest-based (i.e., professional associations), demographic-based (i.e., urban or rural), geographic-based (i.e., city, county, state, national, international), and/or characteristic-based (i.e., ethnic groups, older adults).

Purposes: The aims toward which a learning opportunity is directed, including general and specific intended outcomes (goals and objectives); reasons for engaging in (learners), providing (providers), and/or supporting (society) learning opportunities.

Content: The substantive content that is studied and/or applied in learning opportunities, including knowledge, skill and attitude areas.

Methods: The structures and processes through which learning opportunities are provided, including setting, formats, learner/provider roles, and learning/teaching activities.

Resources: The human, physical, financial, and time resources that are available, acquired, and used to facilitate learning opportunities.

Support functions: The activities that enable the provision of learning opportunities. These may include policy-setting and governance, program planning and administration, design and production of learning resources, information exchange, guidance and counseling, testing and placement, instructional planning, research, evaluation and staff training.

Outcomes: The results, both short-term and long-term, planned or unplanned, of learning opportunities.

Basic Research Questions

When the various aspects of learning opportunities are viewed from each of the three perspectives (learner, provider, and society), a series of questions results. Answers to these questions will provide a descriptive data base for research on lifelong learning during adulthood. The questions are coded to the framework in Table 1 (e.g., L-2, learners' purposes).

Basic Descriptive Data Needs: Learners

L-1 By whom (individuals and groups with what characteristics and living in what settings) are learning opportunities sought and/or undertaken?

L-2 For what purposes do learners seek and/or engage in learning opportunities?

L-3 What is the content of learning opportunities?

L-4 By what methods are learning opportunities planned and carried out by learners?

L-5 What learner resources (human, physical, financial and time) enable and facilitate learning opportunities?

L-6 What support functions (e.g., planning, acquiring information, testing and placement, management, evaluation, design and production of learning resources) do learners need and/or provide for themselves when engaging in learning opportunities?

L-7 What are the learner outcomes (both intended and unintended) that result from learning opportunities?

Basic Descriptive Data Needs: Providers

P-1 By whom (individuals and/or institutions with what characteristics) are learning opportunities provided and/or facilitated?

P-2 What are the providers' purposes in providing and/or facilitating learning opportunities?

P-3 What is the content of learning opportunities offered and/or facilitated by providers?

P-4 What methods are used in the provision of learning opportunities?

P-5 What provider resources (human, physical, financial and time) enable and/or facilitate learning opportunities?

P-6 What support functions (e.g., policy-setting and governance, information exchange, counseling and guidance, testing and placement, program administration, instructional planning, design and production of learning materials, research, evaluation, and staff training) are offered by providers to enable and/or facilitate learning opportunities?

P-7 What are the provider outcomes (both intended and unintended) that result from the provision of learning opportunities?

Basic Descriptive Data Needs: Societal Context

S-1 In what societal context(s) does lifelong learning occur?

S-2 What societal purposes does lifelong learning serve?

S-3 In what ways does the societal context influence the content of learning opportunities?

S-4 By what methods does society encourage and support both learners and providers in the lifelong learning process?

S-5 What resources (human, physical, financial, and time) are supplied to learners and providers by the societal context?

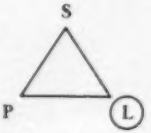
S-6 What support functions (e.g., policy-setting and governance, program planning, design and production of learning resources, information exchange) are offered to learners and providers by the societal context?

S-7 What are the societal outcomes (both intended and unintended) that result from lifelong learning?

An Agenda for Research on Lifelong Learning during Adulthood

Current research needs will be described in terms of the focus on learners (L), providers (P), society (S), and their interactions. As a visual cue, the primary focus of each research area will be illustrated by the following symbol:

For example, research that focuses on adult learners would be designated:

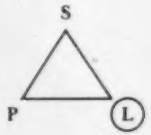


Interactions will be represented by arrows. For example, research on the impact of federal funding (society) on educational institutions (providers) would be designated:

Research on the interactions of learners and instructional methods, reflecting the mutual impact of the interaction, would be designated:

Each of the following nine research areas identified by the advisory panel is predicated upon the basic descriptive data that need to be compiled on learners, providers, and the societal context of lifelong learning during adulthood. The research areas are then expanded by the inclusion of more specific research topics that are considered by the panel to be important at this time to the development of the body of research on lifelong learning during adulthood. There is no significance to the order in which the items are presented.

Research that Focuses Primarily on Learners



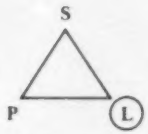
1. Learner needs that may be met through lifelong learning

Examples of current priority topics for research include:

Learning needs of particular groups of adults, especially the educationally disadvantaged, the elderly, racial and ethnic minorities, the physically or mentally handicapped, workers, and women.

Nature and impact of a hierarchy of needs (e.g., as suggested by Maslow) that may cause certain needs to take priority over others.

Contributions of lifelong learning to life stage transitions and self-actualization of individuals.



2. Learner characteristics or conditions that facilitate or impede adults' engaging in and benefiting from learning opportunities.

Examples of current priority topics for research include:

Characteristics of adults who have achieved a satisfactory mix of work, learning, and leisure activities, that may have implications for lifelong learning.

The extent to which the settings people live in affect what and how they learn.

Learner characteristics or conditions that present barriers to participation by particular groups of people (e.g., the educationally disadvantaged).

Patterns of participation in learning opportunities by special populations (e.g., the physically handicapped).

Relationship of adult learning and developmental processes (e.g., life stage transitions); limits of human educability.

Relationship of learning styles and strategies to learner characteristics and outcomes.

Personality influences on motivation and self-directedness of certain groups of adult learners.

Effects, both positive and negative, of preparatory education on the adult learner.

Research that Focuses Primarily on Providers

3. Characteristics or conditions of institutional and individual providers which may influence adults' participating in and benefiting from learning opportunities

Examples of current priority topics for research include:

Financial assistance policies and procedures.

Scheduling and locating instructional programs to encourage learner participation.

Relationship of characteristics of different types of institutional providers (e.g., nonschool vs. public school providers and public schools vs. community colleges) to the nature and quality of learning opportunities offered.

Current status of knowledge, skills, and attitudes of teachers of adults.

4. Administrative and management functions of provider institutions that may facilitate or impede the provision of learning opportunities

Examples of current priority topics for research include:

Effectiveness and appropriateness of various program development approaches (e.g., alternative futures exploration).

Issues of quality control on the part of diverse providers.

Effectiveness of administrative roles, functions, and time use.

Marketing and informational services designed to reach potential learners.

Interorganizational roles and relationships among multiple providing institutions within a community (for example, educational brokering).

Systems analysis of provider institutions to determine the nature and effectiveness of their structure and management.

Effective methods of staff selection, training and evaluation to ensure competent practitioners.

Availability and effectiveness of guidance and counseling for adult learners.

Research that Focuses Primarily on Society

5. Impact of lifelong learning on society

Examples of current priority topics for research include:

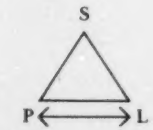
Ways in which lifelong learning can and does contribute to the solution of major social problems.

Relationships between availability and use of learning opportuni-

ties and resources, and the economic and quality of life measures for a community.

The potential costs of a large scale entitlement program, taking into account possible effects on employment.

Research that Focuses on the Interactions of Learners, Providers, and Society



6. Ways in which providers and learners interact to facilitate lifelong learning

Examples of current priority topics for research include:

Nature and effects of interactions between teaching and learning styles and learner outcomes.

Relationship of evaluation measures to learner competence.

The effects of different instructional formats (e.g., group vs. individual instruction) and settings (e.g., "study circles" in the work environment) on learner participation and outcomes.

Effective ways to link learners with resources.

Differences between learner needs and provider needs; expressed learner needs vs. perceived or normative needs (e.g., needs which result from societal or provider expectations).

Reasons for adult participation and non-participation in learning opportunities (e.g., Carp, Peterson and Roelfs study, 1974).

Materials and methods which encourage adults to become more self-directed learners.

7. Impact of society on learners; public policies and practices which facilitate or impede adult learning

Examples of current priority topics for research include:

Societal and cultural expectations of adults (e.g., "competence", both minimal and role specific).

Features of family, work and community which influence adult learning.

Tax incentives or disincentives to participation in learning opportunities.

Effects of making learning activities compulsory rather than voluntary (e.g., mandatory continuing education for professional people).

Nature and effects of the "corporate curriculum"—the latent cur-

riculum (instilling of attitudes and values) as well as formal training encouraged, required and/or provided by employers.

Public support for information services (federal legislation on Education Information Centers).

8. Impact of society (public practices and policies) on providers of learning opportunities

Examples of current priority topics for research include:

Impact of legislation, mandates on provider institutions.

Interactions of federal, state, local and institutionally funded programs that affect providers.

Impact of various financing methods and policies on programs (e.g., pricing and support policies necessary to enable traditional institutions to survive and provide quality programs if they must serve increasing numbers of part-time students).

Social issues and/or policies that influence the professional preparation of practitioners (e.g., certification, credentialing).

Effectiveness of the ways in which educational policy is made (traditionally based on existing rather than anticipated needs).

Rewards and incentives (or lack of) to publicly funded programs for exemplary performance.

Ways in which different segments of society (e.g., federal government, private enterprise, the local community) contribute to lifelong learning endeavors.

9. Dissemination and use of research findings

Examples of current priority topics for research include:

Effectiveness of various ways of translating and disseminating research knowledge to society, providers and learners.

The impact of knowledge about lifelong learning gained through research, on individuals and/or groups of adults as learners, individual practitioners, institutional providers and policy makers.

Effective application of knowledge from other disciplines and fields of social practice (e.g., physical sciences and medicine, psychology and sociology, business and industry, the military) that may have implications for lifelong learning.

Comparative analysis of lifelong learning endeavors internationally, with the intent of improving ways to facilitate lifelong learning.

Further Development of the Research Agenda

This research agenda is offered as a starting point for systematically building and expanding the body of knowledge related to lifelong learning. The next steps might include:

More extensive review of current research related to each of the research topics.

Translation of research topics into researchable questions.

Derivation of relevant research findings from other fields for their application to lifelong learning (Even, 1977b).

Circulation of the research agenda to both adult learners and adult education practitioners, for their reactions and inputs regarding research which would be most useful for the solution of learning and educational problems.

Periodic review and revisions of the research agenda so that it will reflect the most current areas of high priority research needs.

Appendix

A Response to the Research Agenda by a Group of People from University Extension and Continuing Education Programs

The research agenda developed by the Advisory Panel on Research Needs in Lifelong Learning during Adulthood was presented as a starting point for a continuing developmental process. Members of the panel suggested various activities that could be undertaken. One was to circulate the agenda to adult education practitioners for their suggestions regarding what research studies they would consider potentially productive and most useful.

Thus, in April 1978, a group of five people from university extension and continuing education programs met in Chicago to discuss the research agenda. Beforehand, they had reviewed the March 15 draft of the panel's paper.

Meeting participants included:

Dr. Phillip Frandson
Dean, University Extension
University of California-Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California

Dr. Betty Giuliani
Office of Operations Research and Analytical Studies
Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan

Dr. Richard Moore
Dean, Continuing Education
University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, Nebraska
(Chairperson, NUEA Committee on Survey Research)

Dr. James Summers
Extension Specialist-Research Office of Research and Development
West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia

Dr. Clive Veri
Dean, College of Continuing Education, Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois

Dr. Norman D. Kurland
Coordinator, Adult Learning Services Project
New York State Education Department, Albany, New York
(Chairman, The Advisory Panel on Research
Needs in Lifelong Learning during Adulthood)

Purposes for the Meeting

Initially, it was agreed that participants' efforts during the day would most usefully be directed to responding to the panel's document from the perspective of practitioners reviewing an agenda prepared by researchers and identifying key issues of concern to educational providers of adult learning opportunities.

General Response to the Panel Document

The group found the document helpful in terms of providing a "road map" for the terrain covered by the term lifelong learning. The framework and the definitions were judged understandable and comprehensive, and likely to prove useful to researchers, practitioners, funders, and policymakers as they direct their concern to lifelong learning.

Reactions to the multiple perspectives of learners, providers, and society were mixed, although the group as a whole agreed, of course, that there are significant differences in the ways that learners, providers, and society perceive and become involved in lifelong learning activities. However, there was some concern that separating the issues into the three groupings might serve to distract attention from their interrelatedness. For example, separating learner issues from provider issues might imply that these two are distinct, although, in actuality, they are closely interrelated. The addition of a new category, focused on the interactions of learners, providers, and society, helped to moderate this concern.

If the identification of research issues from different perspectives is, indeed, useful to researchers, a greater effort must be made to represent adequately each one of them. It was the opinion of this group that research issues identified by the panel represented first and foremost the perspective of a researcher. This is illustrative of the gulf that exists between researchers and practitioners, between those who decide what research should be initiated, and those who are potential users of the results.

Second, the provider perspective was emphasized. This can be partially attributed to the fact that educational researchers are usually associated with an academic institution that has a dual mission of research and teaching. Thus, professors of adult education may be both researchers and providers of instruction to adults.

Provider issues seemed to be identified from the researcher's perspective, and learner issues from the provider perspective. In addition, the term "learning opportunities" sometimes seemed to mean "teaching opportunities." Because of the changes taking place in the nature and extent of adult learning, more research is needed from the perspective of the learner. And these research needs should be identified by the learners themselves. Future efforts to revise the agenda should take this into consideration.

It was observed that in attempting to be comprehensive, the list included so many areas and topics that priorities that were clear did not emerge.

Usefulness of Research to Practitioners

Although the usefulness of educational research is thought to lie in its potential ability to provide solutions to educational problems, there is doubt among educational practitioners as to whether or not research can, indeed, lead to improved educational practices. This group of people from university extension and continuing education programs raised the question again and expressed their belief that research has the greatest chance of being useful to practitioners if:

- practitioners are involved in identifying needed research;
- research is linked to educational problems that have been previously delineated;
- research results are reported in ways that are comprehensible to practitioners; and
- the results are made readily available to their potential users.

Practitioners are generally not very interested in research that focuses on single issues. The program administrators who participated in this meeting believed there was greater potential in the interactive issues posed by the panel. For them, the most useful outcomes of research would be the identification of sets of variables known to interact with other sets in predictable ways. For example, the adult learner's need for structure can be met in numerous ways, with predictable outcomes linked to certain actions on the part of the provider. On an administrative level, research regarding outcomes of differing missions of colleges and universities would provide information for decision-making about the adoption of institutional missions. Research outcomes presented in this way would pro-

vide guidelines for program planners and administrators as well as instructors and other practitioners.

Solutions to educational problems are not simple; researchers must deal with complex research areas where issues are sometimes difficult to define, and where there is often considerable overlapping. Sponsors of research efforts must recognize the need for more complex and time-consuming research, committing adequate funds to such efforts.

Research Needs from the Provider Perspective

One of the purposes of this meeting was to identify, from the provider perspective, areas of research that might produce information helpful to those who make educational (programming) decisions. The participants addressed the issue of "priorities" by adopting the primary criterion of urgency, or immediacy of needs. Thus, their intent was to identify the issues currently in the forefront of educational administration concerns, issues that might be better dealt with if more information were available. It will be left to researchers to translate these issues into researchable topics and questions.

Thirty issues were thus identified initially. They are listed in no significant order, as it was agreed that all were important.

1. Quality dimensions of lifelong learning programs. How are they measured? How are they taught? (This includes quality dimensions of learners, teachers, and administrators.)

2. Qualities and competencies of exemplary teachers. How are they measured? How can they be taught? How can teachers' attitudes be changed? Are there general competencies as well as role-specific ones?

3. Competencies of exemplary administrators? How are they measured and taught?

4. Characteristics that learners employ in the selection of providers.

5. Useful knowledge from other fields, such as marketing, sociology, psychology, anthropology, political science, law.

6. Role of providers (institutions) in transferring information to learners (e.g., education information centers).

7. Role of brokering (including interorganizational relationships).

8. Mission of colleges and universities in the next 10-20 years, es-

pecially the role of colleges and universities in lifelong education. (Evidence of differences in mission and process of determining mission.)

9. Effectiveness of institutional organization in the delivery of programs to meet adult learning needs.

10. Competency maintenance of professionals.

11. Quality of teaching of adults. Effective evaluation measures, instruments, processes.

12. Improvement of information-seeking skills of learners (to determine and satisfy needs).

13. Ways to extend the curriculum logically to provide continual supplemental education activities (especially as related to continuing education for the professions).

14. Responsibility of institutions to provide lifelong education; self-pay philosophy vs. public's right to sufficient education for successful functioning.

15. Usefulness to learners of particular content areas.

16. Relationships among providers re: roles and activities.

17. Skills required to be a provider (general and specific).

18. Institutional needs and purposes for providing lifelong learning opportunities.

19. Research related to "the institution" (college, university) in lifelong learning.

20. Research related to "the teacher" (individual provider).

21. Research related to "the manager" (administrator).

22. Research related to "the program" (delivery format).

23. Research related to "the specialist" (professional).

24. Research related to "the support services" (counseling, information, and so on).

25. Funding: impact on access and transition. Basis for funding lifelong learning at state level. Distribution of financial aid to part-time students.

26. Impact of open access on institutions and programs. Development of competency-based credit-awarding and certification procedures.

27. Student support: provision of needed resources and services.

28. Faculty resources: effective use of faculty, including changing assignments, roles, and so on.

29. Effective ways of training and retraining staff.

30. Research on differences and/or similarities between adults and children as learners.

A Preliminary Synthesis of the Key Issues

A review of these 30 issues led to grouping and further synthesizing, resulting in a list of nine issues believed to encompass all the original ones. They were not rank ordered.

1. Role, mission, and organization of provider institutions, especially colleges and universities.

2. The teacher: competence, selection, training, performance, evaluation, credentialling.

3. Continuing education for the professions; maintaining professional competence.

4. Identification and selection of learner needs, as information for program planning.

5. Knowledge from other fields translated, disseminated and applied to lifelong learning or adult education.

6. Funding: influence of various funding sources and methods.

7. Effective management; organizational structure and functioning, program administration.

8. Support services: brokering, counseling, information exchange, including adults' inarticulated needs for information.

9. Processing and certification: influence of open access, experiential degree programs, and competence-based certification on provider institutions (e.g., institutions becoming credentialling agents rather than providers of learning opportunities).

Limitations

This attempt to identify key issues of concern to educational providers that might be addressed by research should be interpreted as a step in an ongoing process. It represents merely the results of a one-day meeting of only five people. Issues were identified from the provider perspective, and specifically, from the perspective of extension and continuing education in colleges and universities. The list is not comprehensive, the participants recognizing that the initial grouping and synthesizing process was only a first step in refining the agenda. However, it provides a starting point.

Further Development of the Research Agenda

Meeting participants affirmed their support of the types of activities proposed by the panel to build and expand systematically the body of knowledge related to lifelong learning. Specifically, they recommended the following:

1. Identification and translation of existing information gained from research both in education and related fields (i.e., marketing, evaluation, management, organizational sociology, "politics" of education); dissemination of this information to practitioners, in language and formats that are easily understandable and applicable.
2. Interpretation and dissemination of research results to program funders and legislators for help in decision-making.
3. An invitational conference where learners, providers, community representatives, and researchers would meet to discuss research needs. Participants would be involved in consensus-building activities (meeting in groupings determined by type of provider) to identify common problems. As the conference progressed, involvement and interaction with other participant groups would occur; and finally, everyone would meet with research specialists so that the identified problems could then be expressed in viable research terms.

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